

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of facilitating person-to-person commerce over the Internet, the method
2 comprising the steps of:
3 harvesting images from a plurality of sites based upon user-supplied information,
4 the user-supplied information including descriptions of items for sale and
5 locations from which images to be associated with the items can be
6 retrieved;
7 creating thumbnail images corresponding to the harvested images; and
8 aggregating the thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation at a remote site.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of creating thumbnail images
2 corresponding to the harvested images comprises the steps of:
3 for each harvested image
4 decompressing the harvested image from a source format to a decompressed
5 image format;
6 converting the decompressed image format to a thumbnail image format; and
7 compressing the thumbnail image format into an output format.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the source format comprises one of the following
2 image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD,
3 XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.
- 1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the output format comprises one of the following
2 image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD,
3 XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the locations comprise Uniform Resource Locators
2 (URLs), and wherein the step of harvesting images from a plurality of sites based
3 upon user-supplied information comprises the step of downloading the images from
4 the plurality of sites specified by the URLs.

1 6. A method of displaying items in an person-to-person online trading environment,
2 the method comprising the steps of:
3 storing at a local site a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the
4 first thumbnail image created based on a first image at a first remote site;
5 storing at the local site a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second image at a
7 second remote site; and
8 combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation
9 at a third remote site.

1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of harvesting the first and
2 second images from the first and second remote sites, respectively, based upon
3 user-supplied information including Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) from
4 which the first and second images can be retrieved.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of scaling the first and second
2 images to fit within a predetermined space.

1 9. A method of accessing a database, the method comprising the steps of:
2 loading a database comprising a plurality of thumbnail images completely into a
3 virtual address space of a process starting at a first address; and

4 retrieving a thumbnail image of the plurality of thumbnail images from the database
5 by indexing into the virtual address space at a location defined by the first
6 address plus an offset corresponding to the thumbnail image.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of loading a database comprising a
2 plurality of thumbnail images completely into a virtual address space of a process
3 starting at a first address comprises opening the database as a memory mapped file.

1 11. A method of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML), the method
2 comprising the steps of:
3 accessing a data store having data for display, the data including information
4 associated with an item including an item number; and
5 generating HTML including a reference to an image associated with the item, the
6 reference based upon the item number and an image format associated with
7 the image.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the reference comprises an inline image tag, and
2 wherein the step of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML) including a
3 reference to an image associated with the item comprises specifying the SRC
4 attribute of the inline image tag in the form <path><item number>.<image
5 extension>, where <image extension> comprises a three or four character extension
6 corresponding to the image format.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the reference is in a form other than a query.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the image is stored in a database that is accessed
2 as a memory mapped file.

1 15. A method of displaying items, the method comprising the steps of:
2 storing in a database a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the
3 first thumbnail image created based on a first user-specified image at a first
4 remote site;
5 storing in the database a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second user-
7 specified image at a second remote site; and
8 responsive to a query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web
9 page for presentation at a client from which the query originated.

1 16. A method of displaying items in an person-to-person online trading environment,
2 the method comprising the steps of:
3 creating a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the first
4 thumbnail image based on a first image at a first remote site;
5 creating a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for sale, the
6 second thumbnail image based on a second image at a second remote site;
7 and
8 responsive to a user query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a
9 web page for presentation at a client from which the user query originated.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of updating the first thumbnail
2 image.

1 18. In an online commerce environment, a method of allowing a user to preview a
2 plurality of items for sale, the method comprising the steps of:
3 receiving a query; and

- 4 causing a plurality of thumbnail images corresponding to items that satisfy the user
- 5 query to be displayed, each of the thumbnail images created based upon a
- 6 user-specified image.